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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/003,032	11/15/2001	Adolf Zajber	HM-450	1209

7590 04/28/2003

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EXAMINER

LIN, KUANG Y

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1725

9

DATE MAILED: 04/28/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

17C

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/003,032	ZAJBER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Kuang Y. Lin	1725	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 April 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1 and 3-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1, 3-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1 and 3-10 are again rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 56-80,364 and further in view of Behrends for the same reasons as set forth in last office action.

Namely, JP '364 substantially shows the invention as claimed except the flexible steel bands. However, Behrends shows the use of a flexible spine 40 for connecting the blocks 46 to form a starter bar. The starter bar of Behrends combines the advantage of flexible starter bars and rigid starter bar in that a minimum of space and labour is required to store the starter bar after it has been

severed from the cast strand and the starter bar is self-supporting in the curved configuration and therefore does not require support rolls. Also, because the starter bar does not have any conventional pin connections, problem of wear and link binding are also avoided, less maintenance is required and costs of operation decreased (see col. 6, line 38+). It would have been obvious to provide the flexible spine of Behrends for connecting the blocks of JP '364 in view of the advantage. With respect to claim 3, Behrends teaches to make the flexible spine of a high strength material with high fatigue resistance. Thus, it would have been obvious to use any alloy steel which is high strength and fatigue resistance for making the spine. With respect to claim 3, it is conventional to provide a recess in the starter head for connecting the same to the strand (see, for example, Kuttner). With respect to claim 5, the claimed structure is also deemed to be conventional (see, for example, knell et al). With respect to claim 6, the pin and hole in the blocks of Behrends is functionally equivalent to the key and the slot, respectively as claimed. With respect to claims 7 and 8, it would have been obvious to make the blocks of conventional starter bar with any configuration as long as the structure has the required strength.

4. Applicant's arguments filed April 5, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

- a. In page 5 of the remarks applicants stated that JP '364 does not disclose a dummy bar for a continuous casting plant for preliminary steel sections. However, the claimed preliminary steel sections are related to work piece which are extraneous to the dummy bar. If applicants mean that "preliminary steel sections" is referred to a strand of I-section or H-section, the scope of the claim does not include that limitation. Further, it would have been obvious to modify the configuration of the dummy head of JP '364 and Behrends for casting I-shape or H-shape strand.
- b. In page 6 of the remarks applicants stated that Behrends merely shows a starter bar for a single strand continuous casting plant and thus does not suggest a dummy bar for a continuous casting plant for preliminary steel sections. However, it is not clear why the dummy bar of Behrends can not be used for casting preliminary steel sections. Since the dummy bar of Behrends can be separate from the cast strand after start up process. The separated dummy bar then can be used for starting up in the next strand. If applicants mean that "preliminary steel sections" is referred to a strand of I-section or H-section, the scope of the claim does not include that limitation. Further, it would have been obvious to modify the configuration of the dummy head of JP '364 and Behrends for casting I-shape or H-shape strand.
- c. In page 6 of the remarks applicants further stated that the "flexible spine 40" of Behrends, composed of individual sections, is not comparable to flexible spring steel bands. However, the claimed flexible spring steel bands of instant

application also composed of individual sections. Further, the flexible spine of Behrends is made from a high strength material with high fatigue resistance (see col 3, last paragraph). It would have been obvious to use spring steel bands for making flexible spine since spring steel possesses these properties.

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kuang Y. Lin whose telephone number is 703-308-2322. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 10:00-6:30,.

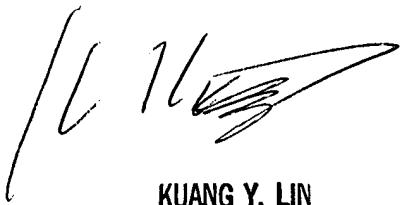
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas X Dunn can be reached on 703-308-3318. The fax phone numbers

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for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310
for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or
proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-
0661.

April 21, 2003



KUANG Y. LIN
EXAMINER
GROUP 320

